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SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON UNGA RESOLUTIONS ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHILDREN IN LEBANON

REF: STATE 176793

¶11. Polchief delivered the talking points contained in Reftel, on November 1, to MFA Multilateral Division Director Susan Gordon.

¶12. Gordon was clearly uncomfortable in her justification of certain aspects of the two NAM resolutions, particularly the omission from the resolutions of any mention of Hizballah, and wondered if other UN member states or groupings beside the US, such as the EU, were opposed to the two NAM resolutions. Polchief said that he did not know but that, since France, Italy and perhaps other US members are participating in the Unifil II peace keeping force separating the Israeli military from Hizballah in south Lebanon, he could not imagine they would look favorably on such one-sided resolutions.

¶13. Gordon did cite Israel's "disproportionate" response to Hizballah's kidnapping of the two Israeli soldiers as justification for the resolutions, and said that, as a member of the NAM, it was unlikely that T&T would fail to support the resolutions or even abstain. Nevertheless, she said she would convey the US position to her superiors. Finally, she added that, since the MFA has not sent anyone to New York for this year's UN General Assembly session, the T&T Mission to the UN is extremely understaffed.

¶14. COMMENT: As in the case of the Venezuela/ Guatemala vote on the Security Council seat, T&T will again likely avoid any direct rejection of a US request for support by citing its obligatory commitment to some larger grouping, this time the NAM. END COMMENT.

AUSTIN